

States" in the Navigable Waters Protection Rule. This rule provided certainty for farmers and ranchers, and designated authority back to States to regulate their own waters after years of Federal overreach.

Unfortunately, President Biden has once again determined that the Federal Government knows best and announced his intent to review the rule, likely signaling a return to the Obama administration's WOTUS rule, which sought to Federally regulate every small stream, ditch or puddle of water. This announcement is especially frustrating as many western States currently face an extreme drought, leading to a severe water shortage for not only our agriculture producers, but also drinking water and hydroelectric energy generators. Further regulation adds insult to injury.

Producers and water users at the local level know their community best, which is why I joined several of my House colleagues on legislation that would codify the Navigable Waters Protection Rule and on a letter to President Biden stating our strong opposition to any return to the expanded Federal jurisdiction over waters around the country. I have also led legislation that would push back on executive overreach in our agriculture, energy, and natural resource sectors.

Our farmers and ranchers are the original conservationists and continually update practices to reduce water use and inputs so that they can continue to produce safe, affordable food while maintaining their water supply for generations to come. We must provide certainty regarding their local water rights and continue to stand in opposition to any overreaching regulations that threaten the livelihoods of Kansas farmers and ranchers.

RECOGNIZING CHARLES JACKSON FRENCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Charles Jackson French, a World War II hero with ties to Omaha who made one of the most underappreciated sacrifices in American military history.

The story of Charles Jackson French is an American story: One of courage, sacrifice, and hope. Charles, a Black man, was born in a racially segregated Foreman, Arkansas, on September 15, 1919. In 1937, Charles enlisted in the United States Navy. After completing his enlistment, he moved to Omaha, Nebraska, to be with family, but after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he reenlisted.

According to accounts, on September 5, 1942, Petty Officer First Class French was serving as a mess attendant in the racially segregated USS *Gregory*. As a Black man growing up in 1930's Arkansas, Charles lived in a time when segregation laws prohibited Black people

from swimming alongside White people in public pools and beaches, yet when the USS *Gregory* was attacked and sunk by Japanese gunfire off the coast of Guadalcanal, it was Petty Officer French who dove into the treacherous waters of the Pacific to save his fellow sailors who had been wounded.

Petty Officer French loaded 15 of his fellow sailors into a lifeboat and saved his injured comrades from drowning. However, Charles knew that they could not simply float to shores controlled by the Japanese where they would meet a fate worse than death. Prisoners were often tortured then executed. Military.com recounted how Charles tied a rope around his waist with the help of his shipmates and towed his fellow sailors through shark-infested waters for 8 long hours until they were finally identified and saved by an American landing craft.

In his book "Black Men and Blue Water" Chester Wright recounted his conversation with Petty Officer French who told him that when he and the raft full of survivors were rescued, persons aboard the ship told Charles to go "where the colored boys stay" while the crew tended to the wounded White survivors. Charles further shared that the sailors rescued by him told the crew: "He ain't going nowhere. He is a member of the *Gregory's* crew and he damned well will stay here with the rest of us."

Just like the sailors who stepped up at the time for French, it is our time to stand up and recognize with full measure the sacrifice and service of French, whose story has been underappreciated by the Navy and history. A real-life hero like Charles must be recognized by the military and the country that he devoted his life to.

In World War II, the Navy gave French a commendation letter. I have now asked the Navy to review and consider upgrading to a medal, and the Navy is reviewing this now.

Full recognition of U.S. Navy Petty Officer First Class Charles Jackson French is long overdue. We owe it to Charles, his family, and to the millions of Americans who learned from Charles' story.

Last Friday, I also introduced legislation to rename one of Omaha's post offices after Charles, and I am pleased that Representatives JEFF FORTENBERRY and ADRIAN SMITH have joined me in this effort to recognize a Nebraska hero.

Today, I call on the Navy, Congress, and the White House to recognize the service and sacrifice of Petty Officer First Class French so that all Americans, especially our Nation's future leaders and servicemembers, can be inspired by Charles' display of patriotism and sacrifice. But also, so the family of Charles can be comforted by the eternal gratitude of a Nation that Petty Officer First Class French so dutifully served. This three-decade veteran salutes him.

RECOGNIZING NORTH CAROLINA SWEET POTATO COMMISSION'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission's 60th anniversary.

In 1961, six sweet potato producers chartered the commission to support growers and to maintain North Carolina's standing as a leading sweet potato producing State. They are now more than 400 sweet potato growers strong as well as packers, processors, and business associates who remain dedicated to supporting our State's prosperous sweet potato industry.

Since 1971, North Carolina has ranked as the number one sweet potato producing State in the U.S. with 65 percent of the Nation's sweet potato production. North Carolina sweet potato producers are family farmers who have been cultivating their land for generations growing many different crops. They work day and night, year after year to ship delectable, high quality, nutritious North Carolina sweet potatoes all across the country and the world.

Agriculture is the backbone of North Carolina's economy, and the sweet potato industry is absolutely critical to our food supply in North Carolina and in the country. It is not an understatement to say that the North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission has more than fulfilled its founding mission to strengthen our State's sweet potato production, and I congratulate them on their 60th anniversary.

May they have many more years of providing every American with one of our Nation's safest, nutritious, and might I add, delicious vegetables grown.

CONGRESS MUST AGGRESSIVELY ADDRESS THE NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Speaker, our national debt exceeds \$28.1 trillion. Congress year after year continues spending money with seemingly no regard for the debts we are pushing onto future generations. While it was necessary to spend a significant amount of money to get us through the COVID-19 crisis, we must now move aggressively to address the national debt, in my opinion, the most significant domestic threat that our country faces. And the sooner we take action the better.

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Unfortunately, the current administration doesn't seem to feel the need to pursue fiscal restraint. President Biden's spending agenda is hurting families and small businesses across the country. Meanwhile, he has sent Congress a \$6 trillion budget request.

This additional spending will lead to even more inflation. The excessive spending Congress recently approved has already resulted in inflation. We